

## Southwest Biological Science Center Weekly Highlights

### November 28, 2005

**Science and Management Highlighted on the Colorado Plateau.** During the week of November 7th, the Southwest Biological Science Center co-hosted the 8th Biennial Conference of Research on the Colorado Plateau. This conference brings together researchers from government and academia with resource and land managers, providing a forum for the communication of scientific data, management activities, and information needs. This year approximately 350 people attended the 160+ scientific presentations, symposia, and panel discussions. USGS science was highlighted in over two dozen diverse presentations, ranging from geologic mapping in the Grand Canyon to exotic plant networks/databases to biological science research results. Mark Sogge, Flagstaff, AZ, 928-556-7194

**Is Saltcedar Always Bad for Birds?:** On the evenings of November 16th and 17th, Southwest Biological Science Center researcher Mark Sogge gave invited lectures to the Northern Arizona Audubon Society (in Sedona and Flagstaff, respectively) on the ecology of the invasive plant saltcedar (a.k.a. tamarisk), and its use by birds. His talks, which were attended by NAAS members and the public, focused on the establishment and spread of saltcedar, and the degree to which it is used by the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher. The flycatcher nests extensively in saltcedar, and Sogge reviewed data from USGS studies showing that the degree to which saltcedar is beneficial or harmful to the flycatcher (and many other bird species) is dependent upon the geographic and ecological setting in which the saltcedar occurs. Furthermore, he discussed how the potential benefits of saltcedar removal/control will be largely dependent upon the type of habitat that replaces the saltcedar, once it is removed. Mark Sogge, Flagstaff, AZ, 928-556-7194

**Avian Influenza and Migratory Birds in the Western United States:** USGS Southwest Biological Science Center (SBSC) scientist, Charles Van Riper III, will present information on migratory routes of birds around the world and the potential impacts of avian influenza transport on December 14, 2005 as part of the seminar series and panel discussion at the University of Arizona Medical Teaching School in Tucson, Arizona. This is a monthly seminar series that is televised by the University of Arizona Medical School for broadcast to the entire medical community throughout the state of Arizona. Charles Van Riper III, Tucson, AZ (520) 626-7027.

**Denny Fenn, Director of the Southwest Biological Science Center, Retires:** Denny Fenn, Director of the Southwest Biological Science Center, is retiring in December after a productive and eventful career spanning 33 years. After 23 years with the National Park Service, he went on to become the Western Regional Director, and ultimately, Deputy Director of the National Biological Service. From 1996-2002 Denny was the Associate Director of Biology. His career came full circle when Denny became the Director of SBSC, returning to his home state of Arizona. Denny exemplified the spirit and implementation of leadership throughout his career, culminating in receipt of the prestigious Presidential Rank Award in 2005. Denny will be spending more time with his wife, three children and 7 granddaughters. We wish them all the very best in retirement and thank Denny for his exemplary service to the USGS. Jeffrey Lovich, Flagstaff, AZ, 928.556.7358